

# COMMON SCHOOL ASSISTANT:

A Monthly Paper, for the improvement of Common School Education.

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From the well-known character and abilities of the Editor of this Paper, and the vital importance of the cause it advocates, we hope that every citizen will consider it his duty to aid in giving the "Common School Assistant" a circulation in every family and school in the Union.

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## COMMON SCHOOL ASSISTANT.

Huron, Ohio, June 8, 1836.

MR. J. O. TAYLOR—DEAR SIR—I regard the influence of your paper, with the deepest interest. The cause it advocates is not only the cause of Freedom to millions, but if I mistake not, the one, if properly understood, to prevent all those evils which the benevolent movements of the day are trying to correct. Ignorance and wrong education produce all those crimes, vices, follies and errors, whose correction draw off all the benevolence of the land. Now, as it is much easier to prevent than to cure, the philanthropist is beginning to learn that he ought to act on the mind while the character is forming, or more properly on our Common Schools, for in them the character of the nation is formed. It was well said by some one, "It is much easier and cheaper to educate the infant mind, than to support the aged criminal." What immense sums are now expended every year in supporting alms-houses, penitentiaries, courts of justice, temperance societies, moral reform societies, &c. almost the whole of which might be saved, if a tenth part of the sum had been given to procure a right education. Then, again, what an untold sum does this country yearly lose, by not having the benefit of the productive, creative MIND, that now lies dormant and unknown. The land produces according to the intelligence of the cultivators;—all the sources of wealth depend upon the mind, that opens and controls them. Why should not our legislators do more, then, for the mind? Why can not legislation be preventive, instead of being penal? Why should not philanthropists and christians foster and cherish our common schools?

Sir, I hope that your paper will go to every family in this great western country. We want nothing so much as such efforts as you are making in the "Empire State." You are, indeed, taking the right means to become the greatest of the states. I have looked upon New-York for the last year, in her individual efforts to improve her schools, with great admiration. I hope that our state and all the states west will follow the example. I wish your paper success—it will awaken this people to the subject.

With great respect,

S. LANE.

## WHAT WE WANT.

How much of the *practical business of life*, do the children learn in our Common Schools? What is learned that assists the labors of manhood? In a word:—What do our Common Schools now teach that makes THE MAN? Does the young farmer in his District School, and while he is receiving the only education he is ever to get, learn any thing of Agriculture—of the nature of soils and manures? Any thing that teaches him to distinguish the different earths, and their peculiar adaptation to the different grains and grasses. Does he learn any thing of the best breeds of stock—of the best manner of raising, keeping and fattening his cattle, sheep and swine? Is he taught that which makes his profession useful, profitable, or honorable? Is not farming, in too many instances, *blind imitation*—thoughtless, unproductive toil—the slavish delving of the hands without the delights or the aid of intellect? This must be so, when there is no science to observe, or experiment—when, in their only education, the children learn nothing of their profession.

There should be an elementary work on farming, making known the nature of the soils, the best methods of recovering, invigorating, and preparing them for the grains and grasses, the different kinds of manures, and their treatment,—Also the best construction and architecture of farm houses, and the most approved implements of agricultural husbandry. The children may read this in the schools, instead of the thoughtless, unintelligible rote reading of the "English Reader," "Columbian Orator," and similar works now read, and entirely useless to children, or to the purposes of after life. Why cannot the pupils, in the school, have their minds imbued with that which they can put in practice in after life?

Do the Common School teach the children any thing concerning their SOCIAL RELATIONS? their duties to their neighbors, to their social institutions? Is the nature and constitution of their Government taught? Or, its form of administration? Are the children taught their duties to their country,

or their government? Is any thing taught of the duties of public officers?—Such as the "duties of School Commissioners, Inspectors, and Trustees;" the "duties of County Commissioners, Collectors, Clerks and Supervisors;" the "duties of Town Inspectors;" the "duties of Sheriffs, Path-Masters, and Poor-Masters." Is there any thing taught of the "duties of Referees—of Justices of the Peace, or of Jurors?" Do the schools teach any thing of the "duties of Delegates, Electors," or of the "duties of Legislators and Judges." These offices are all open to the children, and they must one day fill them. Should not the people's schools, then, teach some or all, of these important duties? Should not the children learn something of the momentous relations they will sustain to these free institutions, to the peace of society, and to the prosperity of their fellow-citizens? However wise a government may be, its blessings depend in a great measure, upon the fidelity and intelligence of those who administer it. But is there as much care taken to have the laws well administered, as there is to make good laws? Are our Common Schools such that they are preparing the people for their government? Are we taking proper care of the foundation of our civil superstructure? Are not the most of our efforts, our talking, our writing, our reading, and our scrutiny, concerning who shall make and administer the laws, when we should exert our energies in preparing every citizen for the duties which await him? There should be a text book for Common Schools on the "Duties of public officers," and the children in every school should use it.

There also should be a text book on the first simple truths of "Political Economy." Now, the pupils are not taught the use of a circulating medium,—Money; nor the advantages of Exchange and Commerce. The benefits of the Merchant, the Mechanic, and of Professional Men are not taught, or seen distinctly by many. The relation of rich and poor; the nature of the mere earth without labor: what labor is productive, and what unproductive: what constitutes value and price: what makes things high or low price: or the causes of wealth, and happiness, and safety, are not taught! No—none of these things are as yet even dreamed of, in a common education. Yet these simple, attractive truths might be taught in a very short time were there suitable books and teachers. The children waste time enough to learn much more than we here require.

The children should, as a part of their education, also, learn something of their own nature, physical, moral, and intellectual; and something of their relations to their Creator. The physical nature of man, his relations to the Natural Laws, and the cau-

ses of health and disease, the children should grow up familiar with. The moral and intellectual natures, and the laws which the Creator has given them, should be known to all, that every man may foresee and avoid the misery from their infringement. And the children should early and impressively see the requirements of the Creator, and the duties they owe to Him as their preserver and benefactor.

But are any of these things taught in our elementary schools? Yet, should they not all be taught?—taught clearly, understandingly, and practically? They may be, and we trust there will soon be introduced such books and teachers into our common schools as to prove the truth of our assertion.—There is no necessity of keeping a child eight or ten years, to learn to read his primer, write his name, cipher to the rule of three, and hate books and learning for the rest of his life!

No—our schools can and *ought* to increase the MIND of the nation. They ought to enlarge its views; its productive powers, its energies, and render the people industrious and morally and intellectually happy. The Common Schools should prepare men for their Callings, and for Self-government.

Such a "series" is now publishing at the "Common School Depository," No. 67 State street, Albany, under the patronage of several philanthropic gentlemen of this state.—The works will be ready by the first of September next, in time to supply the schools with books this fall. The series is called, the "Useful School Books." This effort is not a speculation, but made, at considerable expense, to benefit the schools, by introducing into them an uniform set of the best books that can be written by our most learned men. The "Useful School Books" have been written purposely for this new series, and by our most distinguished and best scholars. I do not think a better service can be done for our schools, than the effort to bring forward these books. Orders for these books may be addressed to the editor of this paper.

#### LET EVERY ONE HELP.

The friends of education have long felt that something should be done to improve our Common Schools. After various efforts and much thought, they are convinced that a cheap paper, (though one of high character as to matter,) ought to be extensively circulated, that intelligence and experience may speak to every family and school in the Union. With considerable expense, this paper has been issued on the lowest possible terms, that it may be *possessed by all*. It can be sustained on these low terms, only by a wide circulation. But this it cannot have, unless every one in the community feels ready to unite in this effort. It is confidently hoped that some one in every neighborhood, will take a little pains to ask his acquaintances to give their names to the subscription. We tender our thanks to gentlemen who have already aided us in this

great enterprise, and respectfully solicit a continuance of their good offices.

We address this to our fellow-citizens with the belief, that you are willing to aid some of the leading men of our country, (who have established this paper,) in this important and truly patriotic work. Public sentiment must be enlightened on this momentous subject—one of such vital importance to every thing we hold dear to our hearts. Information must be diffused, and public opinion must do for the cause of Common School Education, what it has done for the cause of Temperance.

Get public feeling right and there is no fear but what there will be good laws and that these laws will be obeyed. But as long as there is so much apathy and indifference and error on this subject, the best of laws will be nugatory. The first thing to be done, is to get the attention of the whole people to this subject. We will close by saying, that our free institutions expect "every man to do his duty," on this subject.

#### STUDY OF GRAMMAR—No. IV.

The pupil is now supposed to understand the terms that he is obliged to use in the study of grammar, and also to be acquainted with the nine sorts of speech, and their most usual modifications. Much of the language of the grammar was entirely new to the scholar, and he may now consider himself as through the driest and most difficult part.

At this stage of the study, the pupils should be detained some time in acquiring readiness and accuracy in naming the different classes of words, and in putting them through their respective and various modifications. When this can be done without hesitating or missing, the pupil should learn and apply the rules of syntax. For this exercise he is now prepared; he can now see the reason of having rules. The facts and phenomena upon which the rules are founded he has been attending to—he knows what gave rise to them—how they were made, and their true use.

By this method he has learned grammar in the same way that he acquired knowledge when Nature was his teacher; the particulars before the generals, the facts before the principles. To fill the mind with general rules, without knowing a reason for one of them—to compel the pupil to give them without seeing their application, to load the memory with undefined terms—to expect the pupil to discriminate between things which must and will appear to him to be the same, and to repeat words for years, without annexing to them one idea, is the present mode of teaching grammar. The system that I have now recommended, in the hands of a competent teacher, will secure interest to this science, and ensure practical knowledge from its study.

When scholars see the properties, relations, and government of words, they should be exercised on false etymology; sentences of this nature being given to them for cor-

rection. The teacher should always make them give their reasons for the alteration. Then the scholars should examine sentences which present false syntax. The instructor should always watch for faulty sentences in the conversations or compositions of his pupils. When he detects any, their authors should be required to correct them by their knowledge of grammar. The scholar should make constant use of this knowledge in correcting the bad grammar he will be sure to hear in every society; and he himself should, after this, "write and speak with propriety."

The following will be a rich treat for our readers. "The Beloved Schoolmaster" was written by one of the most popular writers of the day, as will be seen by reading.

[For the Common School Assistant.]

#### THE BELOVED SCHOOL MASTER.

That is a title few schoolmasters win. I had many. Some I feared—some (alas!) I almost hated—one there was I loved; and not only I, but every pupil he ever had.—His name (why should I conceal it, for should this poor tribute meet his eye, his kind heart will not chide mine for indulging its affection) was JAMES STEVENSON. God bless him in his snowy years! If every teacher were like him, the school would not be the place of gloom, that it is so often. Do you ask what were the characteristics of this beloved teacher whom I honor with tears as I write his name twenty years after I was his pupil? I will attempt to describe them—perchance some may seek to emulate them. It will be no fancy's sketch, but far short of the living reality.

*He had himself a loving heart.* He loved his God, and therefore he loved every living thing, but especially his pupils, for those he considered the lambs God had given him, to feed with the bread of the soul. I think I see him now standing at the school room door rapping with his rod against the side to call us in. There is no frown upon his face; no boy is afraid to look up into that benevolent eye, but his pleasant "Good morning, my sons," meets with a ready response from all, as we pass by him to our seats. His smile is like sunshine in the room. Who can help loving one who so evidently loves us? We are ready for any task, for love makes it sweet.

#### HOW HE TAUGHT.

*He taught as one who remembered he had to give an account.* The first duty to which he called us, was prayer to the great teacher. Hardened, beyond the ordinary depravity of youth, must that boy have been, who did not feel the sacred influence of those brief petitions in which he besought of Him, who giveth wisdom to all who ask it, to enable him to teach us, and incline our hearts to learn from him. We all felt it a duty to listen to one who felt so deeply his duty to us.

He was patient with our difficulties. He remembered that we were there to *learn*, not to *know*, and he therefore taught and explained instead of chiding us for blockheads, because we saw not by intuition. If one explanation was not sufficient, he gave another, but never left anything intelligible un-

explained. Like the mother teaching her child to walk, he accommodated his step to our tiny stride. He did not march ahead, commanding us to follow, but seemed to walk with us, sympathising with our little troubles and cheering us on with pleasant words and encouraging smiles. If we did not at once comprehend, he rather laid the blame upon his insufficient teaching, and tried to amend it. He never forgot his dignity in abusing us with opprobrious terms, and we never forgot it by insulting him.

He encouraged our proper curiosity. He was never weary of answering our little questions, but gladly availed himself of any expressed desire for knowledge by giving a ready and familiar reply. It was, therefore, a pleasure to recite to him. In other schools the boys try to shun their turn in recitation, but all his scholars, who may read this, will remember, that we were always disappointed in not having the opportunity of shewing we had not been idle. The idler's punishment was to be kept silent while the rest won his grateful thanks for having, at least, desired to know. The dunce, from whom God had withheld the ordinary gifts of mind, was not treated as a criminal, but stimulated to do "what he could," and allured to exertion such as he was capable of. Many, whom other teachers would harshly have turned back disappointed and despairing, did he lead on to that sure industry, which, by perseverance gains much ground, though slowly.

#### HE MADE THE SCHOOL PLEASANT.

He made our studies pleasant by familiar illustrations. He did not disdain to make his boys laugh by a well-timed joke. I shall never forget some of his translations of dry grammatical rules. Thus, the rule of the relative and the verb, so hard of comprehension by the young mind, became easy and well fixed in the mind by this form: "If no big dog come between the little dog and the bone, the little dog will get it; but if a big dog come between them, poor little fellow! he must go without." And the rule—"The infinitive mood has an accusative both before and after it," was turned into doggerel metre, which readily caught the understanding—

"General Burgoyne was mighty fine,  
With an army before and an army behind."

Geography we learned in imaginary travels—now supposing ourselves on our way to Congress—now following the track of an army or a traveller, or a voyager, and now doubling Cape Horn, and touching at various ports to trade, until, having visited the four quarters of the globe, we returned home richly laden with the spoils of commerce.

Were we to read? He read for us, and we caught from him our emphasis and intonations. His recitations were more delightful to us than the best dramatic exhibitions to the visitors of the theatre. There was a pathos in his oration of Anthony, which often melted us to tears, though the "rent which envious Casius made" in the robe of Cæsar, was a hole in his old silk handkerchief. Dear old man! He was not too proud to show us the way. I first felt the power of oratory while listening to him.

He never allowed us to get weary of study.—His favorite maxim was from his favorite Sappho:

"Bows always bended lose their strength and vigor,  
So does the mind too."

He had a fashion of calling out "*minutes*" when about the middle of school time, which was an intimation, that we might have five minutes play. This rendered other absences unnecessary, and none could otherwise be purchased but by taking a stroke upon the hand from the majestic birch, which was applied gently or severely, according as he considered the request reasonable. Sometimes the "*play*" during minutes was bringing in fuel for the fire, sometimes in doing some little service in his garden, but it was all "*play*," not the less that it was useful. Then, in our longer opportunities of leisure, he would stand and watch our sports, applaud the fastest runner, the most agile leaper, and enter with all his sympathies into the contests for the ball, as we played at "*base*." Thus preventing, by his presence, quarrels and improper language, and proving himself our friend as well as master.—He was the first to put us in mind of vacation, and often did he call us to cheer our hearts by a song and chorus, which anticipated that sunny time of the school boy's life. It was a sort of parody on Horace's "*Nunc est bibendum, etc.*" Vacation was, indeed, pleasant, but we were always glad to receive the old man's welcome back.

#### HIS DISCIPLINE.

He was, however, faithful in discipline, notwithstanding his kindness. But his discipline was that of the moral, not of the physical being. He believed in the rod indeed, but it was never used in angry haste, or capricious impulse. We always felt that whipping gave more pain to him in inflicting it, than to us in enduring it. He reasoned with us of our faults. Taught us that they were rather sins against ourselves and against God, than against himself. Often when the offence was more than ordinarily aggravated, such as profanity or worse language, or falsehood, he was accustomed to keep us after the school was dismissed—with tears plead with us to forsake our folly, and then make us kneel by his side while he prayed to God for our pardon. Willing too was he to forgive upon the first signs of sincere amendment. Unlike too many teachers, he bore no grudges. "There was forgiveness with him that he might be feared,"—and the severest pains of remorse was the thought that we had made him suffer. Kind, excellent soul! A green spot in the desert of my school-boy days, was the time I spent under your eye. "When thou didst smite it was kindness, and thy reproofs were as an excellent oil which did not hurt my head." He was a schoolmaster indeed—"O! si sic omnes."

\* \* \* \* It is years since we have met. The last time I saw him, we wept together. At least three score and ten years had passed over his head, but so gently, that his eye was but little dim, and his natural force scarcely abated. I had been somewhat successful in doing good, and he rejoiced over me, and I was glad because it gave him joy.

We may never meet again, but, if he should read the Common School Assistant, he will learn that there is one heart which cherishes him in pleasant and grateful memory. Perhaps he is at rest, but if he sleeps in death, he sleeps in Jesus. His spirit is with Him who loved little children, and who has promised that he "who gives but a cup of cold water to his little ones shall not lose his reward."

Reader, are you a teacher? If you would teach well, be like him—loving, gentle, patient, pitiful and sympathising. Remember you were once a child—and remember too, you have to give an account of your service to Him, before whose face stand the angels, of the children committed to your care.—James Stevenson was never rich in worldly goods, but he was rich in the affections of all his scholars. Go then and do likewise. It may be, that some of those wayward ones, who now try your patience, will say in some future time, as I say of this dear "friend of my better days"—

"None knew thee but to love thee,  
None named thee but to praise."

Is it said I have drawn too perfect a character, because without faults. He had such doubtless, for he was human. God knew them, and hath forgiven them. I knew them not. He never wronged me. I have none to forgive him—for to me he was all kindness.

Ballston, July 16, 1836.

TO JOHN ORVILLE TAYLOR,

Dear Sir—With our universal suffrage we must have universal knowledge, virtue and temperance, to sustain our institutions. Within the last eight years, full thirty millions of temperance documents have been scattered throughout the United States; these, with other means, have been blessed by the Almighty in effecting a vast and beneficial change in the habits of our whole people, and producing a conviction almost universal, that alcohol, as a beverage, is never useful, but always hurtful. This change is, in my judgment, now saving the people of these United States, directly or indirectly, over 100 million of dollars each year, producing an amount of prosperity unequalled in the history of the world. I believe that your paper is destined to open the way and do for education what temperance publications have done in that great cause. As you will have neither interest, appetites, fashion, or prejudices to contend with, every judicious effort will be viewed with favor by the people at large. During a recent tour of over 4,000 miles, through many states, I have noticed a deep solicitude on the part of the intelligent, on the subject of education, especially the improvement of common schools, which your paper aims at. All that is wanted is information; and the extended circulation of the "Common School Assistant," is well calculated to give it; and to the new states will be of vast importance. I mentioned the paper to many individuals interested on the subject, while on my tour. But few had seen it, or heard of it. That its value may be more extensively known, you may circulate, at my expense, 20,000 of your next number, directing them to those



individuals throughout the Union, who you may think would be most likely to circulate and take steps to secure subscribers for its future circulation. The character of the gentlemen whose names appear at the head of the paper, will inspire the public with confidence as to character.

I am dear sir, truly yours,  
E. C. DELAVAN.

#### READING—No. II.

Reading is a branch of the highest importance, and may be taught well or ill, according to the plan adopted by the teacher. It is generally a tedious and arduous task, and never can be otherwise, nor an agreeable one, unless by the aid of good methods well practised. A teacher of an excellent school in the city of New-York, after about ten years' experience remarked, that reading and writing proved to be the most difficult branches of instruction. If this was the fact with such a teacher, one of little or no experience will be ready to ask, then how can I hope for success? Doubtless by imitating her example: for she has trained many children to be very good readers and writers. Although the school is a monitorial one she faithfully hears them spell, read, and define, and over-looks them while writing on slates and paper.

There are various plans, founded on different principles. 1st. The common, or old fashioned way, of showing one letter in the alphabet, making the child pronounce it, then the rest in order, and going through a class one at a time in this manner. This is founded on some good and some bad principles. We remember what we have heard or seen a great many times over; and after seeing a letter and hearing and calling its name over many times, we connect them in our memory. Thus we by degrees may learn the whole alphabet. But this is very seldom liked by children, and it is generally a slow task. The reason is, that each scholar receives but little instruction. If there are four in a class, and an hour is employed in this branch, each is taught but fifteen minutes. In a class of ten, each gets only six minutes in an hour. If they are all made to attend the whole time, watching over and correcting each other, each may get an hour's instruction. (And this is a principle that holds good in all branches, and should never be forgotten, for it also helps to keep the children out of mischief.)

Books for reading are formed on different plans, and have qualities of different kinds. A well qualified teacher may use any of them with great advantage; and make up for their defects by applying just principles in his own way.

Reading well is a much more simple thing than many pupils suppose. They should be taught to read very much as they should speak: with a natural manner in all respects. By the natural manner they should be made to understand such variation of tones as are proper in conversing, such force or loudness as is necessary for the audience and no more, sufficient slowness or moderation to render what is read distinct and impressive according to its importance. At the same time they should be warned and guarded against the errors in pronunciation, tone, &c.,

which particularly prevail around them; be taught that there is a common standard, and have a clear conception of what it is.

Now, on all the points just mentioned, there are many erroneous ideas. Children are rarely preserved from them without difficulty. Some of them can speak very well, who drawl, or scream, or fall into an intolerably monotonous style as soon as they begin to read. Indeed a great part of the difficulty of making good readers generally is the correcting of faults already acquired, or false notions which are usually derived from the example of others.

Much attention, forbearance, and judgment will be necessary in the training of some children to reading. A little diffidence, apprehension or fear, fatigue, ill health, and other circumstances, affect the voices of some children very sensibly; and may lead the teacher to suppose them dull or wilful. The child must be at his ease, in body and mind, or he cannot read with advantage. The exercise is partly intellectual, partly physical, and it might be added, partly moral. The mind must be engrossed to make out the words and to understand the sense; the voice and all the organs of speech must be at his command, with their bellows, the lungs, which is needed to be in full play, though liable to strictures from various sources; while the feelings must be ready to move in harmony with those of the writer, to give the appropriate variety of tones to his expressions.

Familiar lessons should first be used in reading; and the more familiar the better. Even sentences composed by the scholars themselves, corrected if they need it by the master, may well serve for early lessons. Children should first be made to read what they understand, and something that relates to their own circumstances, and interests their feelings. They will then have the same advantages in reading which they have in conversation. They will perceive the reasonableness and application of the rules and directions given them; they will form the habit of applying them often of themselves, even perhaps in conversation, and thus will greatly lighten and expedite the master's task. In truth, they will find that they already know a great part of these rules, and will derive advantage from a comparison of reading and talking, and be encouraged to pursue this important branch of education with interest and the hope of success.—*School Master's Friend.*

#### DISTRICT LIBRARIES.

That every facility may be offered for carrying out the law of the state in relation to District Libraries, the editor, with the assistance of several literary gentlemen, has selected a library of appropriate books, worth \$20, (the sum the law authorizes the districts to raise,) and will send them, securely packed, to any school that will forward us \$20 by mail, or otherwise. The books will be furnished at wholesale prices, 25 per cent less than they can be obtained at the retail stores.

#### GRAMMAR.

##### THE OLD WAY OF TEACHING.

"Q. What is Grammar?"

A. Grammar is the art of reading and writing correctly.

Q. What is English Grammar?"

A. English Grammar is the art of reading or writing the English language with propriety."

This commences Murray's Grammar; and these are the first words taught to thousands and thousands of us about grammar. And how much good did we ever get from the hours we have spent in learning and reciting the first few pages of that work? Observe what effect the study, when pursued in the usual way, has on the mind and feelings of a child. He sits down to his first lesson in grammar, (as to his first lesson in every thing,) with a strong desire to learn. His feelings glow with pleasure. He thinks he is making progress in learning, his merits are acknowledged in promoting him, he expects to find some thing entirely new, and and he is prepared to do his best. Observe him at the close of the lesson. Does he not almost invariably appear depressed? Has not his zeal abated? Is not his cheerfulness gone? Are not his hopes apparently disappointed? Can the same eagerness, the same predisposition for study be easily restored by the teacher?

Now the child cannot account for this change of feeling, certainly not very clearly. It may be that he will not easily be made to confess that he has done wrong in not getting his lesson, but he can say little to excuse himself, unless perhaps that he had tried. He does not know how to describe the difficulties and discouragements which he has encountered. It is the master's duty to understand them, and to remove or to avoid them.

*The evils of the old method are these.*

1st. It does not allow a proper use of the mind. The only faculty of the mind used is the memory: whereas the reason should be furnished with employment. And this is not a negative evil merely; it is a positive one. For the child is taught not to use his reason, and will be likely to form the habit of neglecting to use it.

2d. The child is not shown, in his first lessons, any useful effects of the knowledge he has gained. Unless the teacher takes care to teach something more than the book furnishes, the child can get no idea of the application of what he has learnt. He will feel that he cannot use language with any more correctness than before, and he will probably begin to despair of ever understanding the subject.

3d. No advantage is taken of that knowledge of grammar which the child possesses before he begins the study. It is not even admitted that he knows any thing of it; and the child is left to believe that he is totally ignorant of it. I doubt not that nine out of ten of those who have commenced the study at our ordinary schools, have had the impression they had it all to learn. Any method that is not founded on truth must be bad. The child has most of the rules of grammar so thoroughly in possession before he goes to school, in a practical form, that he uses them familiarly in common discourse. He

generally puts his nouns, pronouns, and adjectives in their proper genders, cases, and numbers, degrees, &c., his verbs in their moods, tenses, and persons; and arranges them in sentences according to principles which the rules record, but cannot settle nor alter. And so far acquainted is he with the subject, that in many, very many cases, he would correct an error in grammar much sooner than an accomplished grammarian could refer you to the rules even with the book in his hand.

Now when a teacher opens a grammar to set a child his first lesson, he should never indulge the idea that it is a new subject to him. No. On the contrary he should say to himself, the child already knows almost all that this book contains. He has not indeed looked upon the rules in the same order in which they are here presented, nor has he just ideas on all the points which are embraced by the book. But he knows the most difficult parts, and has learnt them by his own efforts. And on this latter fact the teacher will do well to reflect at leisure.

The nature of the human mind, the extent of its powers even in childhood, and the proper means for instructing it, are most happily displayed by every child in learning its mother tongue. Here is a long and difficult intellectual task to be performed by every mind. God has placed this great work in the way of every person at the very threshold of life; and with consummate skill so arranges every thing that it is performed, and will be, by every individual. Nothing but a defect of mind or bodily organs ever prevents children from learning to talk; and talking is grammar alive. Little direct aid is usually given to a child in learning the rules of grammar, yet he soon begins to show an acquaintance with one rule after another, which he has inferred from the use of particular words. For example, years before you could make him understand what gender or number is, he pays much regard to both in his speech; and after having heard one or more verbs used in past time, he will put *d* or *ed* to others, to give them the same modification. Inattentive as we are to the steps in this wonderful, this laborious intellectual progress which children are daily making, we should perhaps overlook them entirely but for the errors they occasionally make, by giving rules too general application. A child is apt to say *I run'd*, for *I ran*, *I speak'd* for *I spoke*, and to put *s* or *es* at the end of every noun to make the plural; as *oxes*, *sheeps*, *mans*, &c. They may be said in this to be right, while the rules are wrong: that is, grammar, or in other words custom, makes exceptions to rules which ought if possible to have no exceptions. Now what is it necessary to teach a child in grammar? What he does not know. This is chiefly exceptions to the rules. The rules he knows, and shows that he knows them by applying them. Another thing to be taught him is, to watch his words, whether spoken, written, or read, and to compare them with the rules.

The study of grammar should produce this one great effort: it should give the pupil a true standard in his own mind by which he can judge of the correctness language. Every person has a standard, of some kind or

other. The child and untaught man judges only by what he has heard. For example, he believes that it is correct to say:

"I *runned* down the hill yesterday, I *did*," because a companion says so. But his father perhaps laughs at him for adding *I did*, and does not find fault with any other part of the sentence. His father's example being now his standard, he uses *I runned*, for *I ran*, through life. It may be, however, that he finds the latter used in books, or sees it authorized by a grammar; and then, preferring this authority even to that of his father, he acknowledges that he has been incorrect. If a child is made to understand both what grammar is, and what it teaches, he will prefer it as authority: for, 1st. It shows the practice and opinions of many men best acquainted with language; and, 2d. It teaches him to view words in a systematic arrangement, which enables him to apply acknowledged rules and exceptions, as well as his own judgment, with ease and clearness.

From all that has been said, it may be concluded, that in teaching grammar, the following things should be done:

1st. The child should be shown that he has learnt much by his own exertions, and therefore can learn more.

2d. He should not be taught merely to commit sentences to memory, or to guess at every thing; but to understand principles, to reason, and judge, until he has a standard in himself, which he can and will apply.

3d. The rules of grammar are useful when well understood.

4th. Every step that he takes should be applied to some case where its use may be seen.

5th. The feelings will be interested, and the courage and exertions kept up.

6th. In this manner much time will be saved, though the first lessons may be slowly learnt.

7th. By these means, we should aim to make grammar used through life.

Several modern grammars are formed on some of these principles; and if the teacher has them, they will afford him assistance. If he has not, he will be able to pursue something of the proper system, after due thought and experiment.—*School Master's Friend*, by Theodore Dwight, Jr.

#### OVERTASKING A CHILD.

Some persons are greatly opposed to *Infant Schools*, and particular methods of instruction, because they suppose them calculated to injure the minds or the brains of children by too severe study. There is danger of this, no doubt, in some cases. The minds of children, like their bodies and feelings, are not calculated nor able to endure so severe nor so prolonged exercise as those of older persons. We can, however, increase the severity and difficulty of any study, by raising obstacles in the manner of teaching. If, for instance, a teacher should refuse or neglect to give any explanations to a child studying arithmetic or grammar, he might leave it in almost hopeless difficulty. At the same time, by being harsh, and keeping the child on an uncomfortable, high seat, near the fire, or in the cold, for two or three hours, he might injure its health, and irritate or distress its feelings in a great de-

gree. Now, as schools generally are, there is far more danger of the mind and health being overstrained by those who actually teach but little, than by those who teach much. At any rate, it is not always the fact, that children who attend to most branches of knowledge in school, or learn most, are in the most danger of having their minds or bodies overtasked.

Children are capable of being taught a great deal of useful knowledge without injury in a year, and, indeed, in a month. Even in a single day, they may make considerable progress. Indeed, they will learn something or other fast. In bad company, how many new words and ideas, tales and habits, they will get in an hour! In a garden, or a field, a mill, a shop, a farm-yard, or a family where they have never been before, how many facts may one be made to receive in a short time, by any person who will answer his questions, and direct his attention. Place a child among persons who speak French, or any other language before unknown, and he will learn to speak it in a very short time. But such knowledge cannot be taught them in years by descriptions, without visible objects, or by general rules, such as may be found in books. You might require a child to study a month a book which described a cat, a fowl, or an apple-tree, and it would not learn so much of it, even with the hardest study, as it might in ten minutes if shown the object, encouraged to ask questions about it, and readily told of its nature. Let, then, the common objection to certain sorts of schools and plans be not too hastily made. Inquire *how* things are taught, as well as how much and what branches. Do not forget these points on entering a school, or in reflecting on instruction.

1st. Are the children made comfortable in their places, and kept healthy?

2d. Are they allowed to rise and move every half hour or hour? [the former for very young, the latter for older ones.] Are their studies changed as often?

3d. Are the subjects presented in a natural, agreeable, and intelligible manner?

4th. Are things in the school favorable to their kindly feelings?

If things are so, there cannot be much danger of their minds being overtasked in learning. Certainly not half as much danger as there is in many schools where the opposite course is pursued, and very little learnt.—*Id.*

The following extracts are taken from a very clever address on common school education, delivered by LYSANDER H. BROWN, A. B., before a convention, held at Watertown, Jefferson county, last September, for the improvement of common schools.

#### SIMPLE ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Truths, simple in themselves, must be divested of every covering of art, and adapted to the simplicity of the youthful mind.—This may be done by the instructor, rather than the author. Wherever illustration, apt and familiar, is resorted to, we have evidence that able teachers, even with imperfect text books, are far preferable to the best books with indifferent teachers."

This is emphatically true. Books are worth but little unless they are accompanied by simple, varied, and delightful illustrations. Yet how few have that fellow-feeling, that true sympathy which is required to diversify and adorn the young learner's lessons!—How seldom do we meet with a teacher who can lay his head and his heart by the side of the little head and heart of his pupil! What tender feelings, what freshness of youthful perceptions, what a transformation of being, for the time, must the teacher have, that he may look into the operations of the infant intellect, and see how children think, and how to make them think. Who should cultivate the *sympathetic emotions* so sedulously as the teacher. But is there much sympathy *now* between teacher and scholar?

Some of our improved school books are so prepared as to be nothing but "saving labor machines" for teachers. The teacher puts the book into the hands of the pupil, who is required to commit to memory verbatim.—When this unmeaning, laborious task is done, the teacher takes the book to himself, in which he finds the questions on the lesson written out for him, and if he can read, is, thanks to the author, able to teach whatever the book contains. He need not look at the lesson—he may forever remain ignorant of the whole subject—the questions are written out for him to pronounce, and the pupil answers according to the words of the book. The teacher is, indeed, a wonderful aid to the scholar!! Let me earnestly beseech teachers to master the subjects they expect to teach, before they attempt to give instruction. When we understand a subject, we are always plain, simple, and perspicuous. It is then that the deepest thought is seen to lie distinct and eloquent, right on the surface of a few plain, short words, and then the child, aye, so too the learned adult, is delighted, charmed, instructed. I should like to pursue this train of thought, for I am afraid that not many "teachers," whether in the school-room or in the pulpit, practically understand this matter. Words are sometimes the substitute rather than the vehicle of thought. The indolent and the half educated must use *verbiage*.

#### THE NURSERIES OF SCIENCE.

"Let the foundation for an education be laid in the young mind, deep and permanent, and upon this the superstructure may be effectually reared.

"Common schools may, in this respect, be considered the nurseries of science, and the manner in which they are sustained, a subject of vital importance to the cause of education."

So important is the truth in this extract, that we beg leave to add something to it, from our prospectus to this paper.

"Not only our civil, but our literary institutions—academies, colleges, and professional seminaries, are dependant on common schools. If the children in the common schools acquire a love for letters, a desire for higher improvement; if they, in the elementary schools, make their studies their delight, and the acquisition and possession of truth their purest and highest happiness, they will wish to go from the common school to the academy. In this land of fa-

cilities, if the primary school has given a right direction, neither parents nor poverty will be able to keep the youth from the highest degree of literature and science. But if the children in the neglected, repulsive common schools, are made to hate instruction, and all the means of acquiring knowledge; if they, in the first steps of an education, find their studies a task and a punishment, they will not only avoid the common school as much as possible, but regard the academy and college with supreme abhorrence. All the allurements of friends will be useless, and the children will probably pass through life with that degree of ignorance which never desires knowledge. If our common schools were what they should be, they would take care of all the higher institutions. The friends, therefore, of these broader, nobler rivers of learning and intellect, should not be unmindful of the springs which create and support. To make academies and colleges flourish, the first step must be taken in the common schools."

#### THE TEACHER'S INFLUENCE.

"The teacher of youth, exercises a sway in the empire of mind, as fearful as it is absolute. He may draw forth the young intellect, and give it an impulse by which it shall surmount every obstacle, and hasten its upward course; or, he may suppress the rising aspirations of the child, and render nugatory all his efforts to advance. It rests with him to mould the disposition, to elevate the desires or crush the hopes; in a word, to fix the destiny of his pupil."

How few perceive the forming, directing, and lasting influence of the common school teachers of a nation! In their hands is the young mind, and by them it is moulded and shaped, while the character is forming and fixed for life! "What manner of men" ought these teachers to be? The coming generation will take its character from the teachers that parents now employ.

Again, how little do teachers discriminate! The same government, and the same method of instruction, is brought to bear upon all, however unlike in disposition, capacities or attainments. The timid and the backward are crushed, while the impudent are unrestrained.

#### ADDITIONAL STUDIES.

"There is no reason why the sphere of common school instruction should not be much more comprehensive; embracing the rudiments of Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, and Surveying, and the elements of History, and Philosophy. The connexion of these branches, with the business of every calling in life, is so intimate, and their application so frequent and necessary, that a course of preparatory discipline which does not include them, must be considered very deficient. The constitution of the state, and of the confederacy should also be introduced into our primary schools as text books."

It will be a new era in the history of common education, when such studies are pursued. Yet, there is no reason why this era should not commence this coming fall. If the districts will assemble and say, we wish our children to learn something more than

merely to read, and write, and cipher to the rule of three, and we will have some higher studies in our school, and, also, an instructor who can teach them, even if we have to give four times as much as we have been paying. If the districts will feel this spirit, the work is done. The children have time enough, and much more, to get a practical knowledge of all these branches.

It rests only with parents to get the proper books and teachers.

But the old books are kept in school in this way, and thus new ones are kept out. A district, that I am acquainted with, met, a short time since, at the request of the teacher, to select the school books. They found more of the old books in school than of any other kind. That they might not throw these away, they concluded that it was best to buy more old ones, thus keeping their school out of fifty years improvement.

We are, by no means, disposed to say that every change is an improvement, but still there are, or *can be*, improvements in school books, and if parents wish to make the best use of their children's time, and of the money they pay to the teacher, they ought to see to it that the best books are procured.

#### CURE FOR ULTRAISM.

"Lastly, we should endeavor to improve our common schools in order that they may serve as a check upon the popular extravagances of the age. There are many new doctrines prevalent, and extraordinary measures taken to promulgate them. Some of these are good, and their progress gratifying to the best feelings of our nature; yet experience has proved that the influence of others is pernicious and destructive."

A good hint, and timely spoken.

"The truth is, we have had quacks in politics, quacks in divinity, and quacks in philanthropy; the natural result of having quacks in instruction."

Very true. Ignorance and bad instruction are the parents and supporters of quacks, whether political, medical, or clerical; and the *only* way to rid the community of them and their maddening impositions, is to educate thoroughly, so that the whole people will not only read, but *think*, and have materials for thought, and observe, and reason. "Ultra" is a word very easily, and may be very indiscriminately used. An enlightened inquiry would make true distinctions.

#### EACH ONE MUST AID.

"Our schools are at present supported mainly, as they should be, by the direct exertions of the people; and it is to the people that we must look for material improvement. Let public opinion be influenced, let public attention be excited, and let the community feel, as a body, that the responsibility rests with them, and that if a reform is produced it must be by their sacrifices and efforts."

The great reason of indifference to our common schools, is this—we practically think that these institutions, and common education, belong to the state. We content ourselves for not acting on this momentous subject, by saying the state has taken this matter in hand, and the state must see to it. When I have asked individual effort in this cause, the reply has been: "O, this



subject belongs to the state government, we can do nothing." And nothing would they do. This is, however, a serious error. The little the state has done will effect nothing unless there is a liberal, enlightened, untiring co-operation on the part of the people—and each one of the people too. Our school system would work much better, and the \$100,000, annually distributed, would be much more useful, if the inhabitants in each district would do their duty, and obey the spirit of the "School Act." Nothing can be more true than what Mr. B. has said in another place. We will let him speak.

"Before any thing beneficial can ensue, a general interest must be excited on the subject. And we see no reason why the cause of common school education should not enlist the efforts of every individual.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Let no one shrink from duty, or urge in extenuation of neglect, the pretence that nothing can be done, even before the attempt is made. Experiment can in no event prove an injury. The subject at least commends itself powerfully to the attention and support of all. To the parent and guardian, for the sake of his child, and his charge—to the patriot and christian, for his country and his God."

The following letter is really ludicrous and satirical, though we think a caricature of the evil it wishes to expose. There is a mistaken parsimony, which ought to be corrected, and perhaps we can laugh some things out of the world, that we cannot reason out.

[For the Common School Assistant.]

#### HIRING A TEACHER.

MR. EDITOR—I will relate to you the remarks I once heard the inhabitants of a district make, at the time I was striking a bargain to teach their school. I went to one of the trustees and said to him, I wish to offer myself as a teacher in your district.—He remarked that he did not know that the people wished a school then, for they had already employed a man three months that year, and could now draw their share of the public money. I replied that the district was large and might support a good school. Here he interrupted me, and with a jewing look, said, "What is your price?" I named the sum of \$9 per month, at which he opened his eyes upon me, and gave me a look which said, "You lazy ignoramus, you can't earn half of that, and it is not worth more than half as much as I pay my men on the farm, to sit in the house six hours a day and play gentleman the rest of the time." I understood his meaning, and said as quick as I could, that I had received \$8 the last year, and thought I ought to have a little more now, as I had some experience. Said he, "We don't give but six dollars, and the teacher must board round." I said that was not enough. "Well, now," said he, "what is the lowest cent you will take the school for and board round." I named \$8. Said he, "We cannot afford it—I have nine children, and it costs so much to send them to school two months in the year, that we must

get a teacher as cheap as we can. Why, sir, my school-bill last year was one hundred and thirteen cents, and I do not know how I could have paid it, if the teacher had not taken a bushel of corn as part pay." I told him I had a family, and would be willing to take produce for pay, and would teach a few months at six dollars a month, if they wished. Said he, "If you will take all that my schooling comes to in grain, I will get you the school, and you will want a little washing done, which my daughters can do, and they generally charge the money for that." He seemed to look with so much anxiety for my consent to the last suggestion, that I thought it best for my bargain, that I should let him have my washing. Upon this, he offered to go with me to the other trustee, who received me with considerable suspicion. He broke out with great violence and said—"I never want to see another teacher as long as I live. We are better without a school, and these rascally teachers"—I began to step away, when the first trustee said, "O, Mr. P——, he will pay you yet. You know that you charged pretty high, and after all it did not come to much more than the schooling of your children." "But," said the second trustee, "he promised to take cider for his teaching Tom and Jane, and to give me the money for the use of the horse."

I found that the last teacher had absconded and taken horse hire instead of cider for teaching the trustee's children. To abate his furious dislike to teachers, and to gain his consent, I said, Sir, I shall wish to hire a horse two or three times during the term, to go and see my family, and shall be glad of yours, and will pay the money in advance. At this, he gave a look of consent and of high approbation, and said, "you will be so kind as to make out the exact time of boarding with each one, for sometimes I have to board the teacher as long as 'them' do 'what' have three children, and I have only two."

I had gained the consent of two of the trustees, and had to bargain with only one more. This one was a shoemaker, and had no children. He readily gave his approbation, when I told him I should want my shoes mended and would give him the job. A school meeting was then called, to learn the voice of the district. The trustees praised me, and told the people I was just the man they wanted, and would teach for six dollars a month. At this, there was a pause, and the people felt of their pockets. Then one of them said, "If he will cut the wood for the school house, and as he boards round, help us milk the cows, we will consent to have him teach." I promised all this, and also to drive up the cows at night, and help take care of the younger children in the morning, while the mothers were getting breakfast. I thought this last offer would please them much and make me very popular, but I found that they considered this as a part of my duties, it had been so long practised with them. Now, Mr. Editor, I taught that school eighteen months, at six dollars per month. They paid me \$19 in money, and the rest in washing, horse-hire, shoe mending and provision for my

family. This is an actual occurrence, as many a school teacher will recognize.

#### ONCE A SCHOOL TEACHER.

##### ON TEACHING WRITING—No. III.

Teachers seldom prepare their pens previous to their being called for, and they are consequently employed in mending them while they should be directing the scholars who are writing. They do not always specify and describe the frequently occurring faults in such a manner as to assist the child in avoiding them, and in improving the next time where he has previously failed. The criticisms are too general, too indefinite to profit the pupil, and he continues after this useless instruction to write in the same careless way that he did before.

Teachers likewise do not preserve the writing-books which have been filled, and hence they are not able to compare the one just finished with others written a few months before. If they should do this, the pupil might often be convinced of that which the teacher is unable to make him believe,—viz. that he makes no improvement. Teachers frequently set copies that are very improper for the particular attainments of habits of the pupil: not discriminating or knowing what is required.

To write with ease and facility that which may be easily read, is not only a desirable accomplishment, but in this land of free and distant interchange of thought, absolutely necessary. And as an irregular blind hand is not only a disgrace to the writer, but a consumption of much valuable time to the reader, I shall give some directions which may possibly improve the present system of teaching penmanship.

The child should commence writing at an early age, as soon as it has mastered its easy spelling lessons. Young children are fond of making marks, and with proper attention will learn to form letters as ready, if not readier, than they will when older. At this age, too, the teacher finds a difficulty in confining their restless minds to the book but for a short time, and writing comes in as a variety, and an amusement to them.

If children commence writing when young, they always become fond of it; but those who are not permitted to begin till they are ten or twelve years of age, very frequently show a dislike to the pen, and become disgusted with the shapeless, uncouth letters their want of practice compels them to make. Their pride looks with scorn upon their inferior performance, and they throw aside the quill with contempt, probably never to make another attempt. I would say, by all means, let children commence writing while quite young.

In their first exercises they should use the slate and pencil. I recommend this after having observed the benefit of using the slate and pencil in more than one hundred different schools. In the public schools of the city of New-York, I have witnessed as elegant specimens of penmanship as I ever met with in any select school, or even writing school; and in all of these public schools the pupils are required to use the slate and pencil for a considerable time.

On the slates, the pupils should form letters and unite them into words. The letters

should be large, and much care taken to give them their proper proportion. The teacher should also see that the pencil (which must be four or five inches long) is held in the same position in which the scholars will afterward be required to hold the pen. Let the pupil continue to use the slate till he can form all the letters with ease, and give them their due proportion, and be able to write the letters with uniformity into words.

#### EDUCATION AMONG THE CHINESE.

In contemplating the interesting fact that vast multitudes of the Chinese people are able to read and write, it is often forgotten that vast multitudes also are left wholly uneducated, surrounded with every thing that is calculated to debase and destroy the best feelings of the human heart. Admitting that only one-half of the inhabitants of the Chinese empire are educated, and we do not think the number is greater than this, nine-tenths of the females will probably be found among the uneducated. Now it is chiefly among these, in the capacity of mothers, nurses and servants, that all the children of the nation are trained during the first and most important period of their lives. At that very time when children require special care and watchfulness, and when they are utterly unable to be their own guardians, almost wholly incapable of distinguishing between what is right and what is wrong, they are placed under the tuition of the most ignorant and vicious persons in the community. It has been said with great truth in regard to christian lands, "we often consign infants to the feeding of those to whose care and skill we should hardly be willing to entrust a calf! And the consequence is well known." In China this evil is carried to a much greater extent than it is in the west. If those who have the care of children only keep them from crying, and prevent their heads and arms from being broken, "they are excellent servants," "charming nurses," while, perhaps, at the same time they are filling the minds of their infant charge with the basest thoughts, and corrupting their imaginations by the rehearsal of stories, and the performance of acts, of the foulest character. The injury which is done in this way is incalculable. By neglecting to educate females, and to take proper care of children in the first years of their lives, the foundations of society are corrupted, and the way is prepared for all those domestic, social, and political evils, with which this land is filled. Such are some of the particulars in which education among the Chinese is defective in regard to its extent.

The London School Society, held its 31st annual meeting at Exeter Hall, on Monday the 9th inst. The Right Hon. Lord Morpeth, M. P. one of the vice-presidents of the society, occupied the chair. The report was read by Henry Dunn, Esq., secretary of the society. A letter was read from the Duke of Bedford, the president of the society, expressing his regret that the state of his health did not permit him to attend the meeting and preside. But he begged the meeting to accept his donation of £100, as a small token of the deep interest which he feels in the objects of the society.

The object of this society is to promote the daily instruction of the poor of every denomination. Its operations, although chiefly directed to meet the wants of the home population, have extended to the colonies, and to foreign countries. It has maintained from its commencement, a model school in London, where teachers of both sexes may be trained for their future employment.—More than 1,200 teachers have been sent forth to various parts of the world, who have instructed upwards of a million of children. There is connected with this model school, a large school for youth of both sexes, in which there are usually about 900 pupils.—In this way 37,710 youth have received an education. The receipts of the society for last year, were £3,144 ls. 4d. and its expenditures £3,631. 15s. 10d.

The king makes a grant of £100 annually to this society. It has a strong hold on the public feelings.

#### WANT OF EDUCATION.

At the present time, we have a multitude of means for the improvement of the popular mind which fail of their proposed end, for want of the elementary preparation which common education ought to afford. Mr. George Combe, the author of a valuable work on the Constitution of Man, has shown in his lectures on popular education, that in Scotland and England, popular libraries are little read; lectures not generally attended; and cheap periodicals of small, or no use, to numbers that might profit by them; and Mr. Combe, has also shown that the inefficacy of these provisions is principally to be attributed to the deficiency of primary and subsequent education, which, as it is generally conducted, excites no curiosity; induces no perseverance; creates no taste for literature and science, as recreation of the mind; and fixes no moral principles that determine the value of high things over low ones—over low, frivolous, or debasing gratifications, which the people still prefer to intellectual.—G. S. Hillard.

#### SIR HUMPHREY DAVY.

"It is through literature and science," says Sir Humphrey Davy, "that we may look forward with confidence to a state of society, in which the different orders and classes of men, will contribute more effectually to the support of each other, than they have hitherto done. Considering and hoping, that the human species is capable of becoming more enlightened and more happy, we can only expect that the different parts of the great whole of society, should be more intimately united by means of knowledge; that they should act as the children of one great Parent, with one determined end—the good of the whole; so that no talent may be rendered useless, and no exertion thrown away.—*Id.*

#### IMPROVED SCHOOL BOOKS.

To those who love the young, who feel their own responsibility to the rising race, and to society; who regard the welfare of every part of the community as essential to the whole; who believe that much as education now does for society, it may do more; and that great as the benefits derived from our provisions are, they may be greater—

greater in kind, greater in degree, greater in diffusion; to such persons we declare yet once more, that a reformation in elementary teaching, a better course of study, and higher purposes in the teaching of all classes of people, is absolutely called for; and we earnestly commend to parents and teachers to seek out and adopt means of improvement. Improved school books must be among the chief instruments of this improvement.—They will help the teacher as much as the learner.—*Id.*

#### A GOOD TOAST.

At a late celebration in Troy, the following toast was given by the Hon. STEPHEN WARREN:

"EDUCATION—One of the main pillars on which rests the stability of a free government—it should be supported at public expense."

Nothing gives us more pleasure than to see such distinguished men, ready to honor and aid this great cause.

#### OBJECTS OF THIS PAPER.

This cheap paper has been established for the exclusive purpose of improving our common schools. The paper will take no part in sectarianism or politics, but the leading objects of it shall be to show the influence and importance of our common schools—to interest the leading prominent men in their improvement—to make known and excite to proper action, the indifference and apathy of parents—to show the want and necessity of well qualified teachers—to point out the defects in the prevailing systems of instruction, and the evils from bad school government—to suggest remedies for these defects in teaching and government—to recommend proper school books—to describe the wrong structure and location of school-houses, and to suggest plans for their improvement—to prevail on trustees, inspectors and commissioners of schools to be faithful in the performance of their whole duties—and, in a word, to urge, by all proper means, every member of this commonwealth to give its hearty co-operation with our common school system.

#### CONVENTION OF COMMON SCHOOL TEACHERS.

The Common School Teachers in the State of New-York are respectfully invited to meet in the Capitol, at Albany, on the 20th of September next, at 12 o'clock. As it is known that this Convention is called for the purpose of increasing the pay and influence of those engaged in this arduous and honorable profession, there will be a full and general attendance. Teachers from every town in the state are expected.

Editors in the state are respectfully requested to publish this notice.

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